

4 March 1994

Title: "The United States and New Zealand: Civility Restored." Representative James Leach strongly supports the US decision to restore senior-level contacts with **New Zealand** for discussions on political, strategic and broad security concerns. (940304)

Source: CONGRESSIONAL RECORD (PERIODICAL), MAR 2

Date: 19940304

Text: *EPF508 03/04/94

THE UNITED STATES AND **NEW ZEALAND**: CIVILITY RESTORED (Text: Rep. Leach in the Congressional Record) (1610) Washington — Representative James A. Leach (Republican of Iowa) strongly supports the United States decision to restore senior-level contacts between U.S. officials and our **New Zealand** counterparts for discussions on political, strategic, and broad security concerns.

"This will result in the first high-level bilateral dialogue between **New Zealand** and the United States in almost a decade," he said.

"As America looks forward to working with its friends in building a new Pacific community, now is the time in **New Zealand**-United States relations to emphasize our shared heritage, our mutual responsibilities, and our common view of the future," Leach said in remarks on the floor of the House of Representatives.

Following is the text, as it appeared in the March 2 Congressional Record: (begin text) Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, building on progress made by President Clinton and Prime Minister Bolger at the APEC summit last November, the United States announced on February 18 that it is restoring senior-level contacts between United States officials and their **New Zealand** counterparts for discussions on political, strategic, and broad security concerns. This will result in the first high-level bilateral dialogue between **New Zealand** and the United States in almost a decade. This Member strongly supports that decision. It has been long past due.

Most Americans are probably unaware of what the U.S. ban was all about. Briefly, in 1985 **New Zealand** moved to compromise the integrity of the Australia-**New Zealand**-United States Alliance (ANZUS) by adopting a strict anti-nuclear policy, subsequently enacted into legislation, which prohibited U.S. Navy ship visits by nuclear powered or potentially nuclear armed vessels. In reaction, the U.S. suspended its ANZUS obligations to **New Zealand** and sharply restricted high-level dialogue on foreign policy and security. Until last Friday, that policy remained in place.

Fortunately, the flap over ship visits did not disrupt our overall bilateral relations. After all, the **ties** that **bind** our two peoples remain strong: a common heritage rooted in democratic institutions and frontier immigrant traditions, as well as our allied status in every principal engagement of the century. We cooperate on an impressive panoply of issues, ranging from the crucial world trade talks to human rights to environmental protection and Antarctic research. And our economic **ties** continue to deepen, with two-way trade rising to about \$2.7 billion and the United States becoming **New Zealand's** second largest direct foreign investor.

In foreign policy and broad international security, the U.S. and **New Zealand** enjoy an enormous commonality of interests. The U.S. values Wellington's experienced counsel in the South Pacific Forum, its regional leadership role, and continued security cooperation in Southeast Asia. More broadly, **New Zealand's** tradition of good global citizenship stands as a beckoning model for all. We welcome in particular **New Zealand's** recently increased international activism, such as its vigorous participation in U.N. peacekeeping operations and leadership on the United Nations Security Council.

The ANZUS rift with **New Zealand** did not affect overall United States strategic engagement in the Pacific. But the end of the cold war has made effective multilateral cooperation and institution-building more, not less, important to advancing U.S. interests in the region. Thus ANZUS remains an important trans-Pacific anchor for the United States, even as the region develops new means and institutions, such as APEC, to help meet the compelling challenges of our time.

For many years this Member endeavored in the strongest possible terms to impress upon the executive branch that there could be no prospect for restoring security **ties** while restrictions on political access remained in place. They were offensive to **New Zealand** sensibilities and frankly counterproductive. Last year the new administration appeared to recognize such and initiated a lengthy policy review, the results of which are now evident.

In this regard, it is to the credit of President Clinton, Assistant Secretary of State Winston Lord, his deputy Mike Owens, the East Asian and Pacific Affairs office at the Department of Defense and Admiral Larson — the Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Command — that a change in U.S. policy was finally effected.

Likewise, the support and understanding of our staunch ally Australia, which itself outpaced very considerable anti-nuclear pressures in the mid- 1980's and with whom we consulted very closely on this issue, is much appreciated. In addition, **New Zealand's** very able and very fondly regarded Ambassador in Washington, Dennis McLean, has worked tirelessly over the past several years to restore civil political discourse.

But as the administration made clear, even with civil discourse restored, renewed bilateral security **ties** will remain problematic until Wellington is prepared to come to grips with its own increasingly anachronistic anti- nuclear ban. Here we all recognize that won't be easy. The divisive and emotional politics of the issue are well understood in Washington.

One unlikely outcome is a unilateral resumption of security cooperation by the United States. Despite enormous fondness for **New Zealand**, there is no Congressional dissent from the principle of alliance responsibility. Likewise, the Congress remains supportive of one of the crucial keepers of the peace in this century — the U.S. Navy — and our global policy of neither- confirming-nor-denying the presence of nuclear weapons (NCND).

Nevertheless, assuming a majority of New Zealanders still want to have security relations with the United States, as virtually every opinion poll since 1985 has shown, a healing of the ANZUS rift can still be realistically contemplated.

After all, the taproot of Wellington's novel anti-nuclear policy stemmed from **New Zealand**, indeed world, doubts about the sincerity and capacity of President Reagan in his first years in office to advance arms control. Yet in partial measure Reagan's Evil Empire doctrine has been vindicated by history and subscribed to by a new generation of Russian democrats. It also led to a new era of progressive U.S. leadership on arms control, from the INF treaty to START I and START II. The United States now supports a comprehensive test ban treaty and has proposed eliminating the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. All tactical nuclear weapons have been removed from U.S. surface naval ships. Even the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone (SPNFZ), long supported by Canberra and Wellington but bitterly opposed by the Pentagon, is now under very active policy review.

In other words, through American leadership on international arms control, the United States has effectually removed the original strategic concerns underlying **New Zealand's** antinuclear ban. Those concerns cannot logically be the basis for **New Zealand** objections to renewed security ties.

Likewise, by removing a ban on high-level political contacts, the United States has dramatically improved the diplomatic and psychological climate for considering an eventual resolution of the nuclear issue.

While we all hope that there will eventually be some movement on this issue in Wellington, Americans recognize the genuine and strong public antipathy in **New Zealand** to nuclear weapons, as reflected in its antinuclear legislation. Given the changed strategic landscape, this Member can see no reason to ask **New Zealand** to compromise its core principles against nuclear weapons. It is a given of **New Zealand** public opinion and public policy that we must respect. And those principles need not necessarily conflict with our policy of NCND.

New Zealanders might then reasonably ask, what's the problem? My sense is that its chiefly in the ban on nuclear powered warships, the only such legislation in any country of the world. It clearly restricts the operational flexibility of the U.S. Navy. While over 90 percent of the 148 United States vessels to visit **New Zealand** waters between 1960 and 1984 were conventionally powered, some 10 nuclear propelled vessels did make port calls during that time. While the United States would undoubtedly strive to respect **New Zealand** sensibilities on this issue, it is impossible to imagine having normal military-to-military cooperation or return to an alliance relationship, if some of our ships can't visit.

Because this problem appears more psychological than substantive, many in Washington were hopeful that the December 1992 report of the authoritative and impartial Somers Commission on nuclear propulsion safety would have stimulated greater domestic debate in **New Zealand**. Nonetheless, the findings of the report remain timely and significant.

I would only quote from the first finding of the Commission: The presence in **New Zealand** ports of nuclear powered vessels of the navies of the United States and United Kingdom would be safe. The likelihood of any damaging emission or discharge of radioactive material from nuclear powered vessels is so remote that it cannot give rise to any rational apprehension.

And as the Somers Commission also pointed out, codes and regulations governing visits by nuclear powered ships would be entirely under **New Zealand's** sovereign control.

From a congressional perspective, the conceptual framework for resolving the ANZUS rift appears clear. With normal relations now restored by the Clinton administration, the question for **New Zealand** to decide is how it sees the world and Wellington's role in it; whether its aspirations for a more humane, prosperous, and stable world order includes mutually advantageous security cooperation with the United States.

As America looks forward to working with its friends in building a new Pacific community, now is the time in **New Zealand**-United States relations to emphasize our shared heritage, our mutual responsibilities, and our common view of the future. Now is the time to underscore our mutual confidence and respect by working together to reinvigorate the ANZUS Alliance.

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